



## Complaints Policy of **Salford** & Districts Football League

*Enabling the development of Children and Young People Through Football*

# Contents:

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|                  |  |        |
|------------------|--|--------|
| 1.0              | Introduction .....   | Page 3 |
| 2.0              | Complaints Policy .....  | Page 3 |
| 3.0              | Definition of a Complaint .....  | Page 4 |
| 4.0              | Where Complaints Come From .....   | Page 4 |
| 5.0              | Confidentiality .....  | Page 4 |
| 6.0              | Responsibility .....   | Page 4 |
| 7.0              | Review .....   | Page 4 |
| 8.0              | Nature of Complaint .....  | Page 4 |
| 9.0              | Who Can Complain .....   | Page 4 |
| 10.0             | Complaints Receiving Officer .....   | Page 5 |
| 11.0             | Complaints Process .....   | Page 5 |
| 12.0             | Receiving Complaints .....   | Page 5 |
| 13.0             | Resolving Complaints .....   | Page 5 |
| 13.1             | Stage One .....  | Page 5 |
| 13.2             | Stage Two .....  | Page 6 |
| 13.3             | Stage Three .....  | Page 7 |
| 13.4             | Final Stage .....  | Page 7 |
| 14.0             | Variation of the Complaints Procedure .....  | Page 7 |
| 15.0             | Monitoring and Learning from Complaints .....  | Page 7 |
| Appendix 1 ..... |  | Page 7 |
| 1.0              | Learning Governance Definition and Meaning .....   | Page 8 |
| 2.0              | For complaints emanating from perceived on field discipline and conduct<br>the complaint is advised to first consult ..... | Page 8 |

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Approximately 2,000 children and young people enjoy playing football within the Salford and Districts Football League (S&DFL)
- 1.2 Around 300 managers, coaches and volunteers associated with member clubs and teams in our league support our young players to enjoy their chosen sport.
- 1.3 The S&DFL were established to work in partnership with Manchester County FA and member clubs to:
- ☐ Provide a strategic direction to support the ongoing development of football for children and young people who live in Salford and surrounding districts
  - ☐ Create a reliable, safe and rewarding playing environment that enables the development of children and young people through football.
  - ☐ Provide a structure (age groups and divisions), competitions and fixtures, to enable structured football for children and young people to be played within Salford and surrounding districts
  - ☐ Provide a governance structure to support children and young people to participate in organised football and to support member clubs to grow and develop. (see Appendix 2)
  - ☐ Help and advise member clubs (as required) to apply FA standard rules and locally agreed bye-laws and apply standards required of Charter Standard clubs
  - ☐ Support member clubs to respect the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people who play their football under the banner of the S&DFL
  - ☐ Promote and safeguard this group of children and young people from discrimination, abuse, exploitation, or treatment which degrades them.
  - ☐ Develop opportunities to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people (and their carers) who play football under the umbrella of S&DFL
- 1.4 The league trustees and management committee have been elected by member clubs to:
- ☐ Ensure accountability to the member clubs for the league's performance.
  - ☐ Assure that the league is managed with probity and integrity
- 1.5 As part of league governance arrangements the league has developed a complaints policy that is outlined below

## **2.0 Complaints Policy of Salford & Districts Football League**

- 2.1 Salford & Districts Football League views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person and or organisation that has made the complaint.
- 2.2 Our policy is:
- To provide a fair complaints procedure, that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
  - To publicise how people wishing to make a complaint about the way the league has discharged its duties (as described above) know how to do so.
  - To make sure all member clubs and league officials of Salford & Districts Football League know what to do they if they wish to make a complaint or are tasked with receiving a complaint

- To provide clarity about the scope of complaints that will be considered by the league and how such complaints will be managed
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

### **3.0 Definition of a Complaint**

- 3.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the way the league has discharged any aspect of **the league's** duties (as described above).
- 3.2 For complaints emanating from perceived on field discipline and conduct the complaint is advised to first consider Manchester County FA: The FA Rules and Governance - The FA Discipline Handbook 2020/21 –details outlined within appendix 2

### **4.0 Where Complaints Come From**

- 4.1 Complaints may come from any person, or organisation that has a legitimate interest in Salford & Districts Football League, including but not restricted to Leagues, Manchester County FA, other Clubs, parents, players and coaches.
- 4.2 A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. How to complain is outlined below.

### **5.0 Confidentiality**

All information relating to a complaint will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### **6.0 Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Salford & Districts Football League's Management Committee

### **7.0 Review**

- 7.1 This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 1/3/16

Date of next Review 01/08/21

Last Reviewed 26/09/20

### **8.0 Complaints Procedure of Salford & Districts Football League**

#### **8.1 Nature of Complaints**

Behaviour and or conduct of a member of the league's management committee that is felt to have been:

- 8.1.1 disrespectful,
- 8.1.2 discriminating,
- 8.1.3 dishonest/fraudulent, or deemed to be responsible for bringing the league's reputation into disrepute.

- 8.2 The league failing to discharge its duties as listed in paragraph 1.3 above

#### **9.0 Who can complain?:**

- 9.1 Young players
- 9.2 Players' parents/carers
- 9.3 Managers and coaches involved with our members clubs

- 9.4 Officials of our member clubs
- 9.5 Spectators
- 9.6 Representatives of Manchester County FA

**Please Note:** When the complaint is being made by an individual associated with a member club the complaint should ideally be submitted to the league on their behalf by the club.

#### **10.0 Complaints Receiving Officer**

10.1 The league's secretary is the league's complaints receiving officer. If the complaint is about the league secretary the complaint should be forwarded to the league vice chair.

Contact details are available via the Salford and Districts Football League's Website

<http://www.cityofsalfordsoccerleague.com/management-committee/>

#### **11.0 Complaints Process**

11.2 Written complaints (letter or electronic communication) may be sent to Salford & Districts Football League secretary acting in the role of league complaints receiving officer at:

<http://www.cityofsalfordsoccerleague.com/management-committee/>

11.2 Verbal complaints may be made by phone to the complaints receiving officer, and or in person to any member of Salford & Districts Football League management committee or divisional secretaries (contact details of all committee members and divisional secretaries) are posted on the league website.

<http://www.cityofsalfordsoccerleague.com/management-committee/>

<http://www.cityofsalfordsoccerleague.com/divisional-secretaries/>

#### **12.0 Receiving Complaints**

12.1 Complaints received by telephone or in person will be recorded.

12.2 The person who receives a phone or a face to face complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Salford & Districts Football League (for example: parent, player, coach, etc).
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.
- The member of the league committee receiving the complaint will provide information and advice to the complainant and to ensure clarity about the complainant's intent will request that the complaint state via email that they wish to make a formal complaint to the league
- As appropriate ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**.

#### **13.0 Resolving Complaints**

##### **13.1 Stage One**

###### **Introduction**

- ☒ Experience has shown that the majority of complaints made to league officials have related to perceived inappropriate, disrespectful, abusive behaviour, or conduct of managers towards one another, young players, or young officials, and do not usually relate to issues that are the purview of the league

- ☐ The member of the league committee receiving any “grumble” will provide information and advice to the complainant and to ensure clarity about the complainant’s intent will request that the complaint states via email that they wish to make a formal complaint to the league.
- ☐ To ensure that a complainant is not discouraged from making a complaint because they do not have access to email, the league official will confirm with the complainant (via a text) that they understand that the complaint is making a complaint rather sharing a “grumble”

***NB - to prevent erroneous complaints being processed by the league a complaint will not be processed until this written/text confirmation has been received.***

13.1.1 In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

13.1.2 Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, information relating to the complaint should be passed to the league’s complaints receiving officer and shared with league trustees within 7 working days.

13.1.3 On receiving the complaint, the complaints receiving officer will record the details in the league’s complaints log. If the complaint has not already been resolved, the complaint’s receiving officer will delegate an appropriate person from the league management committee to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

13.1.4 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

13.1.5 Complaints should be acknowledged by the league’s complaints receiving officer within **7 working days** of the complaint being received. The acknowledgement should state the name of the league official dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure will be attached to this reply.

13.1.6 Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within **35 working days**. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

13.1.7 Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

## **13.2 Stage Two**

13.2.1 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can refer their complaint to Manchester County FA.

The Chief Executive Officer  
Manchester County FA  
Gate 2,  
Manchester Tennis & Football Centre,  
9 Sportcity Way,  
Manchester  
M11 3DU  
Tel: 0161 225 1966

Email: [info@manchesterfa.com](mailto:info@manchesterfa.com)

When this stage is reached the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with Manchester County FA’s complaints procedures

## **13.3 Stage Three**

13.3.1 The third stage allows the complainant to refer their problem to The English FA which is the governing body for the game in England and is primarily responsible for all regulatory aspects of the game.

13.3.2 The complaint should be sent to:

Customer Relations  
The Football Association  
Wembley Stadium  
PO Box 1966  
London SW1P 9EQ

Tel: (0) 800 389 0699 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

The English FA will endeavour to contact the complainant within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

#### **13.4. Final Stage**

13.4.1 The final option is for the complainant to refer their complaint to the Independent Football Ombudsman which has a clear remit to receive and adjudicate on complaints from football supporters and participants which have not been resolved by the football authorities.

13.4.2 The complaint should be forwarded to:

The Independent Football Ombudsman  
Suite 49  
33 Great George Street  
Leeds LS1 3AJ

Tel: 0800 588 4066

Email: [contact@TheIFO.co.uk](mailto:contact@TheIFO.co.uk)

#### **14.0 Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

14.1 The Salford and Districts Football League's management committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the league Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading the complaint resolution.

#### **15.0 Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

15.1 Complaints made about the Salford and Districts Football League will be considered bi-monthly by the management committee to identify any trends that require take further action.

15.2 The league will share an annual summary of complaints, lessons learned and actions taken with member clubs and Manchester County FA

#### **Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation.
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam".
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry.
- Show an interest in what is being said.
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details.

- Ask for clarification wherever necessary.
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation  
e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you".
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise.
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue.
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver.
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met.
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told.
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.

## Appendix 2

### **1.0 League governance definition and meaning**

Governance refers to the process of making decisions which define the expectations, systems and management, of the league to provide:

- ☒ Accountability to the league's young players and officials, member clubs and Manchester County FA for the league's performance.
- ☒ Assure that the league discharges its duties and is managed with probity and integrity.

### **2.0 For complaints emanating from perceived on field discipline and conduct the complaint is advised to first consult**

- ☒ Manchester County FA: The FA Rules and Governance  
<http://www.manchesterfa.com/fagovernance>
- ☒ The FA Discipline Handbook 2015/16  
<http://esports.flipboxapp.net/Discipline/>